

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1-20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently amended): A carrying strap including a shoulder-engaging portion, a first strap portion and a second strap portion, said shoulder-engaging portion extending along the general longitudinal direction of said strap and being intermediate of said first and second strap portions, each of said first and second strap portions including a proximal section and a distal section, said proximal section being intermediate of said shoulder-engaging portion and said distal portion, a corresponding pair of adjacent proximal and distal sections being joined together with a first curvature, the proximal sections of said first and said second strap portions and said shoulder portion being joined together with a second curvature, said second curvature being substantially equal but opposite to said first curvature, said proximal and said distal sections of said first and said second strap portions being configured so that, when used as a shoulder carrying strap for carrying a load, said proximal and distal sections respectively direct weight of said load towards and away from the body centerline of the person carrying said load.

22. (Currently amended): A carrying strap according to claim 21, wherein said proximal sections of said first and said second strap portions extend from said shoulder-engaging portion generally along a direction which is ~~divergent~~ away from said general longitudinal direction of said strap, and said distal sections extend from said proximal section

along a direction which is generally ~~convergent~~ towards said longitudinal direction of said strap, said shoulder-engaging portion comprising a curved portion which is adapted to follow the trapezius muscle of a user, the curvature of said curved portion of said shoulder engaging portion being substantially equal and opposite to the curvature between a corresponding pair of said proximal and distal sections.

23. (Currently amended): A carrying strap according to claim 21, wherein said proximal sections of said first and second strap portions extend away from said general longitudinal direction and said distal sections extend along a direction which is generally opposite an inflexion to the direction of extension of said proximal sections.

24. (Currently amended): A carrying strap according to claim 23, wherein a recess is present between said shoulder-engaging portion and said proximal sections, said recess being adapted for negotiating the trapezius muscle of the person carrying said load and having a curvature which is generally equal and opposite to the curvature between an adjacent pair of said proximal distal portions.

25. (Previously presented): A carrying strap according to claim 24, wherein said shoulder-engaging portion includes a smooth shoulder-engaging surface and a frictional shoulder-engaging surface which are adapted for reversible use so that, when said strap is reversibly used, the weight directing characteristics of said proximal and distal sections of said first and second strap portions are maintained by also reversing the front and rear relationship of said first and second strap portions in relation to the person carrying said load.

26. (Previously presented): A carrying strap according to claim 23, wherein said shoulder-engaging portion and said first and second strap portions in their entirety are

generally W-shaped, the central recessed portion of said generally W-shaped strap configuration being adapted for negotiating the trapezius muscle of said load carrying person.

27. (Previously presented): A carrying strap according to claim 21, wherein said shoulder-engaging portion includes a concave portion and is adapted for reversible use, said shoulder-engaging portion further including first and second alternative shoulder-engaging surfaces, such that when said carrying strap is used in the reverse form, said weight directing properties of said first and second portions are maintained by reversing the front and rear relationship of said first and second portions relative to the weight carrying person so that, during normal use, said shoulder-engaging portion is urged towards the neck of said weight carrying person regardless of the shoulder-engaging surface that is in contact with said person.

28. (Currently amended): A carrying strap according to claim 27, wherein said first and second alternative shoulder-engaging surfaces have substantially dissimilar frictional characteristics, said shoulder-engaging portion having a cushioning pad shaped to follow the contour of the trapezius muscle.

29. (Previously presented): A carrying strap according to claim 21, wherein said first strap portion, said second strap portion and said shoulder-engaging portion together are substantially W-shaped.

30. (Currently amended): A carrying strap according to claim 21, wherein said first strap portion, second strap portion and said shoulder-engaging portion resemble two boomerangs connected together lengthwisely.

31. (Previously presented): A carrying strap according to claim 30, wherein the carrying strap portions comprising said first strap portion, said second strap portion and said shoulder-engaging portion are substantially symmetrical about the center of said shoulder-engaging portion.

32. (Previously presented): A dual strap shoulder-carrying assembly comprising first and second carrying straps of claim 21, and further including fastening means provided between distal sections of said first and second strap portions of said first and second carrying straps for converting said dual strap shoulder-carrying assembly into a carrying strap of claim 21.

33. (Currently amended): A dual strap shoulder-carrying assembly ~~of claim 32~~, comprising first and second carrying straps, each of said first and second carrying straps including a shoulder-engaging portion, a first strap portion and a second strap portion, said shoulder-engaging portion extending along the general longitudinal direction of said strap and being intermediate of said first and second strap portions, each of said first and second strap portions including a proximal section and a distal section, said proximal section being intermediate of said shoulder-engaging portion and said distal portion, said proximal and said distal sections of said first and said second strap portions being configured so that, when used as a shoulder carrying strap for carrying a load, said proximal and distal sections respectively direct weight of said load towards and away from the body centerline of the person carrying said load, and fastening means provided between distal sections of said first and second strap portions of said first and second carrying straps for converting said dual strap shoulder-carrying assembly into a single carrying strap, wherein each said first and second carrying straps includes a reversible shoulder-engaging portion having a smooth shoulder-engaging surface and a frictional shoulder-engaging surface, said fastening means

being disposed on said smooth shoulder-engaging surfaces so that the converted shoulder-carrying strap comprises two reversible and alternative shoulder-engaging surfaces which are substantially frictional.

34. (Previously presented): A carrying strap including a shoulder-engaging portion disposed between a first and a second longitudinal strap ends, said shoulder-engaging portion including a strap length of a first curvature, wherein said shoulder-engaging portion is connected to each said longitudinal strap end via a curved strap portion of a second curvature, said second curvature being substantially opposite to said first curvature, said strap including alternate shoulder engaging surfaces having dissimilar frictional characteristics, said alternate shoulder engaging surfaces including a slippery surface and an alternate non-slippery shoulder engaging surface, said slippery surface being used for shoulder engaging when said carrying strap is used as a strap member in a dual strap carrying system.

35. (Previously presented): A carrying strap according to claim 34, further including fastening means for coupling with fastening means disposed on the slippery alternative shoulder engaging surface of a counterpart carrying strap member of a dual strap carrying system.

36. (Previously presented): A golf bag including a carrying strap of claim 21.

37. (Previously presented): A golf bag including a carrying strap of claim 27.

38. (Previously presented): A golf bag including a carrying strap of claim 29.

39. (Previously presented): A golf bag including a dual strap shoulder-carrying assembly of claim 32.

40. (Previously presented): A golf bag including a dual strap shoulder-carrying assembly of claim 33.